

Washington, D.C. - Congressman John Barrow (GA-12) announced today that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has committed to insure an \$84.7 million loan to Meadows Regional Medical Center for the construction of a new 65-bed hospital in Vidalia to replace the existing 45-year old facility. The loan is made possible through the Federal Housing Administration's (FHA) Section 242 Hospital Mortgage Insurance Program and is the first FHA-insured hospital loan in the state of Georgia.

The project will construct a 195,000-square foot replacement facility that will include 16 examination and trauma rooms, as well as 65 new beds. By insuring the mortgage loan, FHA is enabling Meadows Regional to obtain lower cost financing, saving the hospital an estimated \$14 million in interest payments throughout the life of the loan.

When finished, the new medical center will be the largest construction project completed in Vidalia in over 20 years.

"This is great news for folks in Vidalia and the surrounding area," said Barrow. "I spent last week traveling all over the district to talk with folks about their health care concerns, and everywhere I went I heard the same thing - we need new facilities with the most up-to-date medical equipment. The folks in Toombs County are lucky to have one of America's 100 Top Hospitals, and this loan will help them continue to provide first-rate care."

The construction project will create more than 900 full-time jobs and provide an economic stimulus of almost \$207 million during the construction period. Once completed, the new Meadows Regional Medical Center will support more than 340 jobs in the area and provide an annual economic benefit of approximately \$50 million.

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